



KRONDA THIMESCH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 65

Legislative Update



STATE OF TEXAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



FALL 2023

Dear Neighbors,

Let me begin by saying what an honor it is to serve as your State Representative and thank you for the opportunity to do so. On January 10, with family by my side, I swore to faithfully execute the duties of this office and to the best of my abilities, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of Texas. As a “freshman” legislator, there was a lot learned this past session and we built many relationships that will last a lifetime.

This newsletter will focus on the legislative efforts of the 88th Legislative Session and the two special sessions that followed shortly thereafter. We passed a fiscally responsible balanced budget that funds schools, promotes higher academic achievement, and provides funding to support our efforts to secure the Texas border to keep our communities safe. Additionally, we passed strong commonsense legislation aimed toward funding our economy, lowering property taxes, protecting our most vulnerable, and increasing governmental transparency. While it is possible that by the time you read this, we will have completed another special session, we are proud of the work we have accomplished thus far.

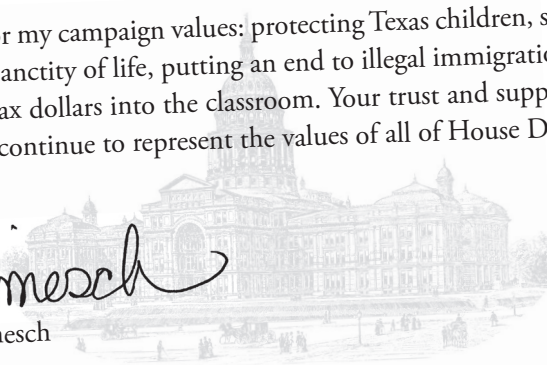
With constituent services being a top priority, we have established both the Capitol and district offices to better serve you. During the interim, we plan to meet with and listen to constituents like yourself, community leaders, local elected officials, parents and grandparents, teachers and school administrators, farmers and ranchers, pastors, doctors and nurses, small business owners, and residents who want to make their voice heard regarding the issues that matter most to our southern Denton County communities and the State of Texas.

I am committed to fighting for my campaign values: protecting Texas children, seeking property tax relief, creating jobs, protecting the sanctity of life, putting an end to illegal immigration, and improving education by getting more of our tax dollars into the classroom. Your trust and support mean the world and I promise to work tirelessly to continue to represent the values of all of House District 65.

Sincerely,

Kronda Thimesch

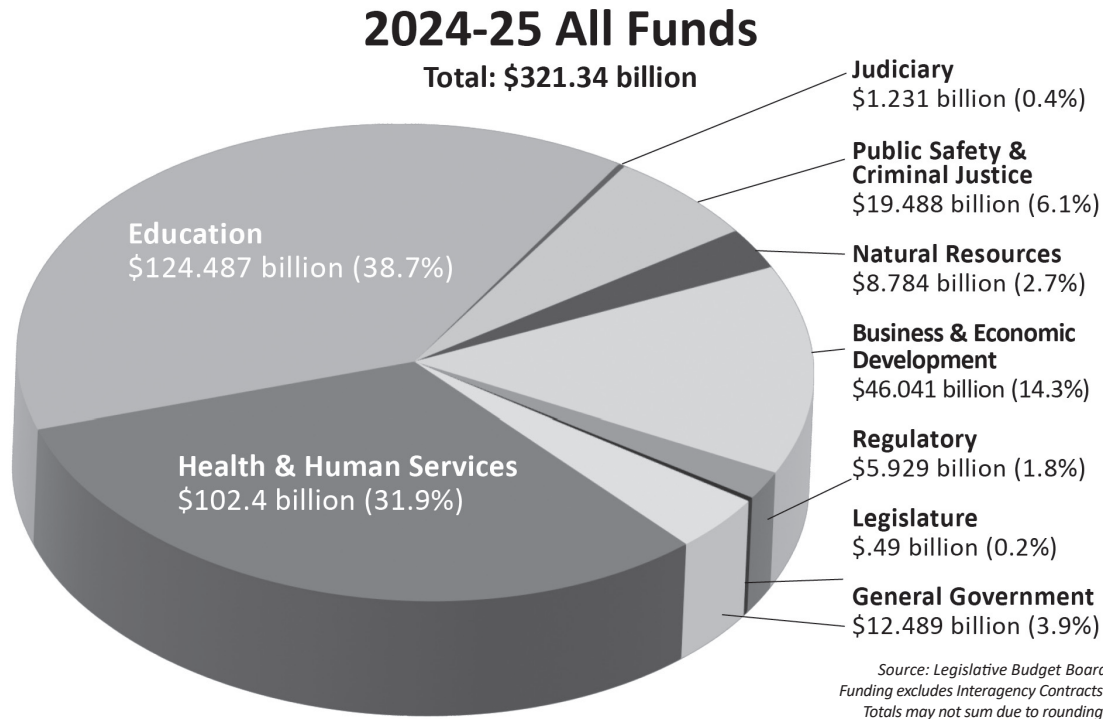
Representative Kronda Thimesch
House District 65



★ SESSION'S BIGGEST ISSUES ★

State Budget

Serving on the House Appropriations Committee and as a member of the Subcommittee on Article III, I am proud to announce that we successfully appropriated \$124.5 billion for Texas education. This allocation reflects our commitment to prioritize public and higher education and invest in the future of our students and communities. House Bill 1 (the budget bill), appropriates \$321.3 billion in total spending for the 2024-2025 biennium. Combined with Senate Bill 30 (the supplemental budget bill), the total appropriations for both bills are under the state's constitutional pay-as-you go limit.



Protecting Texas Children

As a mother, grandmother, and former school board member, fighting for and protecting our children is my top priority. Children are our most valuable resource and the future of our nation and our great state. We must ensure Texas children are protected from the dangers that exist within our surroundings; this session, the Legislature passed several measures to do just that. Some of these measures include:

SENATE BILL 14 (Coauthor) – Prohibits a child health insurance plan from providing coverage for services intended to transition a child's gender. SB 14 prohibits physicians and health care providers from performing surgeries that sterilize a child as well as from providing any puberty suppression or blocking drugs.

SENATE BILL 12 – Defines a sexually-oriented performance and establishes an offense if a performance is carried out in a public place where it could be reasonably expected to be viewed by a child or an individual younger than 18. Cities or counties will have the ability to regulate sexually-oriented performances as they consider them necessary to promote the public health, safety, or welfare.

HOUSE BILL 3 (Coauthor) – Provides schools in Texas with a new standard of emergency preparedness and response for school safety. It enhances school safety standards, procedures, emergency planning, and provides school staff with the training, resources, and authority they need to protect our schools. Most notably, HB 3 requires school districts to have an armed security officer at every campus during regular school hours. The bill provides schools with \$15,000 annually in base funding for school safety related mitigation measures and \$10 per student in the school safety allotment.

HOUSE BILL 6 (Joint Author) – Classifies fentanyl overdoses as "poisonings." The bill expands penalty group 1-B to include more controlled substances. Additionally, HB 6 increases the penalty for certain offenses related to the manufacture and delivery of a controlled substance, to a first-degree felony.

HOUSE BILL 18 (Coauthor) – Creates the Securing Children Online through Parental Empowerment (SCOPE) Act. Prohibits digital service providers, as defined in the bill, from entering into an agreement (including terms of service agreement, a user agreement, and the creation of an account for a digital service) with a known minor, without parental consent.

HOUSE BILL 900 (Coauthor) – The Restricting Explicit and Adult-Designated Educational Resources (READER) Act, provides procedures for rating school library materials to identify content that is sexually relevant or sexually explicit. Additionally, the bill directs the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to adopt standards for school library collection development that schools must adhere to in developing or implementing the district's library collection development policies.

HOUSE BILL 4520 (Coauthor) – Revokes an educator's certification and terminates their employment if they are found to have been convicted or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for the offense of sale, distribution or display of harmful material to a minor. Any educator whose certification was revoked under these circumstances would lose their pension and be placed on the Do Not Hire Registry.

SENATE BILL 1527 – Furthers the state's efforts to end human trafficking in Texas. Provides additional tools for the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes, including child grooming protections, increased penalties for traffickers that use excessive force, and the enhancement of child pornography sentences when multiple images are possessed or promoted.

★ SESSION'S BIGGEST ISSUES ★

SENATE BILL 15 (Coauthor) – Also known as the Save Women's Sports Act, this bill protects the integrity of women's college sports by banning biological men from competing against women.

SENATE BILL 17 – Prohibits institutions of higher education from establishing or maintaining a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) office or carrying out any of the duties such office would conduct.

HOUSE BILL 17 (Coauthor) – Reigns in "rogue" prosecutors who refuse to prosecute specific criminal offenses, ensuring criminal laws are enforced uniformly across Texas.

HOUSE BILL 19 (Coauthor) – Eases the backlog of civil cases by creating a specialized business trial court which allocates the assignment of business court judges to align with the state's Administrative Judicial Regions, and sets up specific jurisdictional parameters for the court.

Border Security Legislation

SENATE BILL 1403 (Cosponsor) – Allows the Governor to develop and execute an interstate compact for border security among interested states. This compact does not require the approval of Congress and would allow states who enter into the compact to share law enforcement intelligence on illegal activity occurring along the border with Mexico.

SENATE BILL 1900 – Codifies into law the Governor's executive order which designates drug cartels or other similar groups as "foreign terrorist organizations," and establishes provisions relating to these organizations.



Representative Thimesch leads a prayer for her female colleagues prior to floor debate for Senate Bill 15, the Save Women's Sports Act.

Election Integrity Legislation

HOUSE BILL 1243 (Coauthor) – Increases the penalty of illegal voting, making it a second-degree felony unless the person is convicted of an attempt, in which case it is a state jail felony.

SENATE BILL 1070 – Ensures Texas participates in an efficient and cost-effective interstate voter registration cross-check program by expanding the factors a publicly developed system can compare and provides that a private option the state uses must meet certain cost and functionality standards.

★ BILLS AUTHORED BY REPRESENTATIVE THIMESCH ★

This session, I had the opportunity to file 22 pieces of legislation over a wide range of topics including teacher certifications, government overreach protections for farmers, the expansion of qualifications for the executor of an estate, and even legislation to address the growing "bots" problem affecting consumer purchases online. Most of these bills originated from conversations with constituents, and it was amazing to see how one person's idea or concern evolved into a piece of legislation. Even those which did not pass helped increase awareness around some issues concerning our local communities and the State of Texas and I look forward to refiling some of them next session. Below is a brief summary of the bills I filed that became law:

HOUSE BILL 1542 (Companion Senate Bill 926) – Restores a statute allowing the Texas Motor Speedway to continue to apply for certain permits with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC).

HOUSE BILL 2336 (Companion Senate Bill 58) – Prohibits individuals from using technology, devices, or software in the sale or resale of consumer goods, or a resale internet website, in a way that functions as a bypass in the regular purchasing process of said goods.

HOUSE BILL 2444 (Companion Senate Bill 1639) – Known as the "Save Our Swifties" bill, HB 2444 prohibits a person from using or creating an automated tool or technology (sometimes called a "bot") to engage in certain online ticket activity.



Representative Thimesch, joined by her freshmen colleagues, presents her first bill on the House floor.

HOUSE BILL 3372 – Clarifies and streamlines the reporting process for credit card processing fees of campaign donations to increase transparency and codify an advisory opinion from the Texas Ethics Commission.

HOUSE BILL 4848 (Amended onto House Bill 5012 by Clardy) – Amends the state tax code to add the city of The Colony to the list of cities eligible to receive tax revenue derived from a hotel and convention center project.

HOUSE BILL 2134 (Amended onto House Bill 3579 by Bumgarner) – Gives cities the ability to implement certain regulations on massage establishments where there have been arrests or convictions for human trafficking related offenses.

HOUSE BILL 3331 (Amended onto Senate Bill 1373 by Hughes) – Amends the Estates Code in order to qualify convicted felons to serve as an executor to a decedent's estate under certain instances.

★ CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ★

PROPOSITION 1, HJR 126 – *Protecting Private Property Rights*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment protecting the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, and wildlife management.

Summary: In the last five years, Texas has lost 1.2 million acres of farmland due to suburban and urban expansion into rural areas. This proposition, if passed, protects and empowers landowners from broad overregulation by preserving their right to engage in certain generally accepted agricultural practices on their own property.

PROPOSITION 2, SJR 64 – *Child-Care Facility Ad Valorem Taxes*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment authorizing a local option exemption from ad valorem taxation by a county or municipality of all or part of the appraised value of real property used to operate a child-care facility.

Summary: Prop 2, if passed, would authorize a local property tax exemption for all or part of the appraised value of properties that operate a child-care facility. Licensed child-care providers would see some relief from higher taxes regardless of ownership of the facility. With the rising cost of child-care, this will help our young families.

PROPOSITION 3, HJR 132 – *Wealth Tax Ban*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of an individual wealth or net worth tax, including a tax on the difference between the assets and liabilities of an individual or family.

Summary: Prop 3, if passed, takes a proactive step to ban the state from ever imposing a wealth tax on its citizens.

PROPOSITION 4, HJR 2 88(2) – *Property Tax Relief*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to establish a temporary limit on the maximum appraised value of real property other than a residence homestead for ad valorem tax purposes; to increase the amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation by a school district applicable to residence homesteads from \$40,000 to \$100,000; to adjust the amount of the limitation on school district ad valorem taxes imposed on the residence homesteads of the elderly or disabled to reflect increases in certain exemption amounts; to except certain appropriations to pay for ad valorem tax relief from the constitutional limitation on the rate of growth of appropriations; and to authorize the legislature to provide for a four-year term of office for a member of the board of directors of certain appraisal districts.

Summary: Texans continue to be taxed out of their homes and we can't continue to fund the future needs of our state on the back of the property tax, it is unsustainable. Prop 4, if passed, would offer homeowners much needed property tax relief by increasing the amount of the general school district residence homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000. Would also allow the legislature to impose limitations on annual appraisal value increases for non-homestead property taxes as well as create newly elected positions on local appraisal boards.

PROPOSITION 5, HJR 3 – *Texas University Fund*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment relating to the Texas University Fund, which provides funding to certain institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy.

Summary: Redesignates the National Research University Fund as the Texas University Fund and changes the eligibility requirements for access to this fund to a merit based approach. Doing so will allow more Texas universities the opportunity to grow and enhance their research performance to achieve national recognition and drive our states economy forward. The institutions of higher education benefiting from this fund include: Texas Tech University, Texas State University, the University of Houston, and the University of North Texas.

PROPOSITION 6, SJR 75 – *Texas Water Fund*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment creating the Texas water fund to assist in financing water projects in this state.

Summary: Texas' water infrastructure continues to experience aging and failing pipes and the need to build out new water supply is clear. Prop 6, if passed, would create the Texas Water Fund to continue investment in water and assist in financing water projects in this state.

PROPOSITION 7, SJR 93 – *Texas Energy Fund*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the Texas energy fund to support the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities.

Summary: Winter Storm Uri's impact on Texas exposed electricity market failures, particularly in reliability. Senate Bill 2627, which passed with overwhelming support during the regular session, tackles reliability issues by introducing a completion bonus and low-interest loan program for new dispatchable generation, alongside loans for enhancing existing generators. Prop 7, if approved, establishes the Texas Energy Fund to maintain and upgrade generation resources, guaranteeing dispatchable generation reliability, and ensures funds from SB 2627 are dedicated to a specific account.

PROPOSITION 8, HJR 125 – *Broadband Infrastructure Fund*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment creating the broadband infrastructure fund to expand high-speed broadband access and assist in the financing of connectivity projects.

Summary: According to recent studies, almost 2.8 million Texas households, or roughly 7 million Texans, lack broadband internet access. Having access to broadband internet is crucial and Prop 8, if passed, would create the broadband infrastructure fund to assist in the financing of broadband and telecommunications projects in the State of Texas.

★ CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ★

PROPOSITION 9, HJR 2 – *Cost-of-Living Adjustment for Retired Teachers*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment authorizing the 88th Legislature to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to certain annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

Summary: This proposition, if passed, would provide a one-time cost-of-living adjustment to individuals receiving monthly death or retirement annuity benefits under the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) as outlined in Senate Bill 10, this amendment's enabling legislation.

PROPOSITION 10, SJR 87 – *Biomedical Devices Ad Valorem Tax Exemption*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation equipment or inventory held by a manufacturer of medical or biomedical products to protect the Texas healthcare network and strengthen our medical supply chain.

Summary: Prop 10, if passed, will exempt from ad valorem taxation tangible personal property used or produced by medical or biomedical manufacturers to strengthen the medical supply chain in Texas. This would allow Texas to be less dependent on foreign countries to meet our need for medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and PPE.

PROPOSITION 11, SJR 32 – *Conservation and Reclamation Districts in El Paso County*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to issue bonds supported by ad valorem taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities.

Summary: Twenty years ago, a constitutional amendment enabled bond issuance by select counties' conservation and reclamation districts for park development. Prop 11 seeks to extend this provision to El Paso County, granting its conservation and reclamation district the ability to issue bonds for regional facility development.

PROPOSITION 12, HJR 134 – *Abolishment of the Galveston County Treasurer's Office*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment providing for the abolition of the office of county treasurer in Galveston County.

Summary: Prop 12, if passed, would abolish the office and designate the duties of the treasurer to another county officer, a request supported by Galveston County voters.

PROPOSITION 13, HJR 107 – *Mandatory Retirement Age for State Justices and Judges*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment to increase the mandatory age of retirement for state justices and judges.

Summary: Currently, judges and justices in the State of Texas are statutorily required to retire at the age of 75. Prop 13, if passed, would raise the mandatory retirement age from 75 to 79.

PROPOSITION 14, SJR 74 – *Centennial Parks Conservation Fund*

The Ballot Will Read: The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the centennial parks conservation fund to be used for the creation and improvement of state parks.

Summary: Currently, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department leases land from private corporations to create some state parks. The private corporation can sell the land, resulting in closure of the park. Prop 14, if passed, establishes the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund to secure funding for enhancing, acquiring, and developing state parks.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION DATES:

OCTOBER 10, 2023

DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE

OCTOBER 23, 2023

EARLY VOTING BEGINS

NOVEMBER 3, 2023

EARLY VOTING ENDS

NOVEMBER 7, 2023

ELECTION DAY



Representative Thimesch visits with Governor Greg Abbott to discuss her legislative priorities.



KRONDA THIMESCH

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 65

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KRONDA THIMESCH
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE



HOW OUR OFFICE CAN ASSIST YOU

Flag Requests - Texas flags flown over the State Capitol make great gifts. All flags are accompanied with a beautiful state certificate including the seal of the Texas House of Representatives.

Capitol Tours - A visit to Austin is not complete without a tour of the State Capitol Complex. If you find yourself in the city, our Capitol office can arrange a tour where you can learn about the rich history of our beautiful State Capitol.

Assistance with State Agencies - My office has an accomplished staff to assist you in navigating through the various governing state agencies. Whether you are seeking assistance with your driver's license or applying for a state grant, we can happily guide you to the appropriate agency and work with you to resolve any questions you may have.

Resolutions/Certificates of Achievements - To commemorate special events such as an anniversary, retirement, or any type of milestone, our office can craft a resolution meant to mark the special occasion.



Denton County representatives (left to right: Rep. Hayes, Rep. Stucky, Rep. Thimesch, Rep. Patterson, and Rep. Bumgarner) together on the House floor.